

## **A DOCTORATE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (DBA): A NEED OR LEISURE**

**YOSER GADHOUM<sup>1</sup> & SALEM M. AL-ANAZI<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Deanship of Research Development, Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, Saudi Arabia

<sup>2</sup>Saudi Aramco Company, Saudi Arabia

### **ABSTRACT**

This research intends to provide insights with regards to the factors that influence Saudi's professionals to take a DBA Program. In this process, it examines elements such as perception of the value of DBA in Saudi Arabia including perceived value in career development, social standing as well as other factors and considerations. Since the 125 respondents are all working professionals, our research also aimed to find out whether DBA knowledge would contribute to notable development and growth in organizations? The history of DBA and Ph.D. Programs in KSA and from developed countries were studied and briefly summarized. The value-added proposition of DBA to the industry and society was overviewed and enlightened in the manuscript. Moreover, research methods we used were outlined in the methodology section. The results suggest that passion for the state-of-the-art knowledge and the career development were the main drivers behind the decision to go for a DBA program according to the Saudi professionals' surveys. Other results were also deterministic for some other factors such as perceived as social standing. The study concludes with providing recommendations for organizations, universities and government in Saudi Arabia to consider the DBA as a highly needed degree for the Saudi Society.

**KEYWORDS:** A Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA): A Need or Leisure

### **INTRODUCTION**

This Project is named “**A Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA): a Need or a Leisure for Saudi Arabia**”. Many professionals pursue DBA to advance and get promoted in their career development and impression, and mainly serves as a gateway for the senior management position. Some are in pursuit of knowledge or the opportunity to contribute to the development of a particular field of study. Most of them fulfill their perception of a respectable social standing.

The pursuit of DBA involves devoting several years in a person's life along with a significant investment of financial resources, without the assurance of completing or achieving the reward of the title “Dr.” being added to a successful candidate's name. It involves great challenges, pushing oneself to overcome his/her limits, patience, and academic prowess.

In this Project, the aim is to pursue greater understanding on the factors that influence professionals to pursue DBA. Why would a person be willing to subject himself/herself to hard work that requires great dedication to complete? Why would a person invest a huge part of his/her wealth on such uncertain returns? What motivates a professional to pursue DBA? What is the purpose of DBA?

This is prepared to find out the importance of DBA in companies and among recruiters. Nowadays, most

professionals prefer Post Graduate courses in business to reach a significant position in employment. The majority of candidates study abroad to attain the degree some prefers to study in established universities. Is DBA just a degree or is it something more?

In the early days, a Ph.D. in Management or Business is often required for those interested in pursuing an academic career as a professor at a business school. Business schools often require faculty to hold a Ph.D. and to engage in research. Business school rankings are often heavily influenced by the proportion of faculty with Ph.D. degrees or doctorates. Research is fundamental to the integrity of a graduate educational institution. Through research, professors gain the expertise required to teach advanced courses and to ensure that they remain current in his or her chosen field. Nowadays, Doctorate Program is not only for the educational field, but companies or private organizations prefer to employ people with DBA.

The main tools used for this study are questionnaire and interview method. The questionnaires were distributed among all departments. Use percentage method as the quantitative method for reaching findings, suggestions, and conclusions. This study aims to explain further professionals' aspirations.

### **Purpose and Recognition**

The DBA is equivalent to a Ph.D. in Business Administration. The DBA tends more towards applied research rather than theoretical research, especially during the thesis writing phase. Schools such as Harvard Business School, Manchester Business School, University of Florida, Grand Canyon University and IE Business School offer the DBA Research-oriented universities with DBA programs in the U.S.

The portion of the program that consists of coursework may be comparable to that of a Ph.D.. However, the larger part of the program consisting of independent research and the writing of a thesis is likely geared towards more applied research in DBA programs, with the research making a direct contribution to business practice. Another way to see the distinction is that Ph.D. aims the creation of new theory, while DBA aims to applying theory to business problems.

### **Contribution**

A typical DBA program has a dual purpose: One is to contribute to both theory and practice in relation to business and management; and second is to develop professional practice and to contribute to professional knowledge. Both the DBA and Ph.D. in Business Administration are terminal degrees, allowing the recipient to obtain a tenure-track position.

### **Geographic Distribution**

DBA programs are offered worldwide. The majority, however, is offered in Europe particularly in the United Kingdom and France (42 percent), Followed by North America (28 percent) and the Asia-Pacific Region, mainly in China (22 percent). Six percent of the programs are offered in Africa and two percent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Most professional doctorates in management were founded in the last ten years and more than half of them in Europe.

**Top DBA Schools in the World for 2014****Table 1**

Rank No.	University	Academic Accreditation	Student Support	International Mindset	Reputation & Seniority
1	Manchester Business School (UK)	75	90	90	95 & 90
2	Maastricht School of Management (NL)	75	85	90	85 & 90
3	Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HK)	80	90	80	80 & 80
4	Cranfield University (UK)	80	80	85	80 & 80
5	Grenoble École de Management (FR)	80	75	85	80 & 75
6	City University of Hong Kong (HK)	70	80	75	70 & 80
7	Universidad Centrum Católica (PE)	75	80	70	80 & 70
8	Instituto de Empresa Business School (ES)	70	75	75	80 & 75
9	Aston Business School (UK)	80	75	70	75 & 70
10	Gloucestershire Uni-versity (UK) / FHM (DE)	60	70	75	80 & 75
11	Manchester Metropolitan University (UK)	70	70	70	75 & 65
12	Durham University (UK) / Fudan Univ. (CN)	80	70	65	70 & 65
13	Queensland Univ. of Technology (AU)	60	75	70	65 & 70
14	University of Surrey (UK) / IBS (DE)	70	60	75	65 & 65
15	University of Reading (UK)	70	60	70	60 & 65
16	Oklahoma State University (US)	60	70	50	55 & 60
17	Kennesaw State University (US)	65	65	50	50 & 65
18	London Metropolitan University (UK)	60	60	65	60 & 50
19	Case Western Reserve University (US)	70	55	55	50 & 60
20	Georgia State University (US)	70	55	50	50 & 55

**Structure and Format**

Typical entry requirements include M.B.A., MSc, or similar masters degrees, or equivalent qualifications in general management, or in a functional field by examination awarded by a professional body. Some universities also ask for significant experience in a managerial or professional supervisory position involving responsibility for strategic issues. The DBA normally requires a significant thesis, dissertation or comprehensive final project including a formal defense and approval by nominated examiners or an officially sanctioned and qualified doctoral review committee. The degree is conferred when all coursework, testing, and written research are completed and reviewed and approved by the awarding institution.

**Notable Persons with a Doctorate of Business Administration Degree**

- Robert F. Bruner – Dean Charles C. Abbott Professor of Business Administration and Distinguished Professor of Business Administration at the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Virginia
- Clayton M. Christensen – Robert and Jane Cizik Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School

- Scott Cowen – president of Tulane University of Louisiana
- Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries– Raoul de Vitry d'Avaucourt Professor of Leadership Development at INSEAD and director of the INSEAD Global Leadership Centre
- Tony Newton - President and Board Chair, British Dental Health Foundation and International Dental Health Foundation <sup>[10]</sup> Durham University Business School
- CK Prahalad – Paul and Ruth McCracken Distinguished University Professor of Corporate Strategy at University of Michigan, Ross School of Business
- Michael E. Raynor – Canadian management expert and consultant with Deloitte Consulting LLP, the Distinguished Fellow with Deloitte Research
- Lenos Trigeorgis – Real options pioneer; Professor of finance, University of Cyprus
- John Quelch – Dean, Vice President and Distinguished Professor of International Management at CEIBS, previously Senior Associate Dean and the Lincoln Filene Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School
- Birger Wernerfelt – J. C. Penney Professor of Management and Chair of Ph.D. Committee, MIT Sloan School of Management
- Robert B. Wilson – Adams Distinguished Professor of Management, Emeritus, Graduate School of Business, and Professor of Economics (by courtesy), School of Humanities and Sciences, Stanford University

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the relationship of Saudi Arabia's economy and unemployment rate to the need of a DBA degree as an essential program that deals with practical managerial issues in a sound academic way.

### What is a Doctorate of Business Administration, Its Aims and Objectives

Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) can be considered as a part-time professional doctoral degree with an international scope and reputation, designed to enhance executive and professional practice through the application of sound theory and rigorous research into real and complex issues in business and management.

It enhances the capability to develop knowledge and theory and their application. The key to this is a program to develop personal, consultancy and research skills in the context of rigorous and relevant research.

### Who Needs to Consider Doctorate of Business Administration Degree for his Career

The program will be of particular benefit to experienced senior executives, consultants, management educators and business school academics. According to Henley, a DBA will enhance professional capability and credibility, develop networks and provide a firm foundation for further career development or a major career move. Employers benefit from supporting candidates for the DBA by attracting, developing and retaining key talent and building knowledge for competitive advantage.

**Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) – Similarities and Distinctions**

The DBA has both rigour and relevance as it contributes to theory and practice in business and management. The DBA typically focuses on research ‘in’ organizations rather than research ‘on’ organizations. It is more likely to involve cross-disciplinary work and mixed methods and contribute to developing students own practice and development.

**Access to Data: Having or Not Having**

One of the greatest advantages of many DBA students is their access to data in their businesses. This data often is unique and sometimes can only be used for their dissertation under serious confidentiality clauses. Ph.D. students, in contrast, often need to build up their database from the scratch, for instance by an online survey or by collecting, coding, and processing publicly available data.

**Ph.D. and DBA Qualification and Career Goals: Fulltime vs. Part-Time Academic**

The students in Ph.D. in Management aim at a career in academia. They apply for positions as fulltime professors after graduating or go for a Post doc for some years. Their key activity is doing research, publishing in academic journals or books and teaching.

In contrast, DBA graduates usually stay working professionals in their companies and want to stay in the business world even after their graduation. However, their doctoral degree qualifies them for doing research as well. They may teach as guest professors, invited or adjunct faculty occasionally and publish in practitioner or academic journals. Also, the doctor title may open some doors for them in their company's hierarchy.

**Knowledge Creation: Differences among Doctoral Programs in Management**

Another difference may be that Ph.D. students primarily aim at developing a new theory, particularly if they want to publish in top management journals.

DBA students, on the other hand, are less required to extend existing theory. Instead, their great contribution is rather the combination of research with concrete business problems. Their starting point, for example, may be a business problem from their companies and the DBA dissertation may generate a theoretical model that explains that specific problem and at the same time abstracts from it so that the model can be applied in other contexts as well. Hence, the DBA dissertation uses often a case-study approach rather than an empirical research approach.

The core idea here is: In the center of a DBA dissertation is a practical problem from the business world that is considered as relevant from both sides - business managers and scholars.

**Teaching Mode: Fulltime vs. Part-Time**

Generally, Ph.D. programs are fulltime programs, and DBA programs can be studied part-time. Since DBA students do not want to give up their work during the program, doctorate of business administration (DBA) programs are often organized as so-called blended programs and mix distance or online learning with residential periods. By this, the students can communicate online with professors and their peer group and only have to come together for some weeks per year.

### **Financing Doctorate in Business Administration**

This makes a lot of sense given that Ph.D. students do not work in business and hence, depend on a solid financing plan. DBA students, in contrast, keep on earning money and may have some savings by which they can pay the tuition fees. They may also be able to tax-deduct their DBA expenses and most likely increase their salary once they have achieved their doctoral degree by gaining better positions. Some companies even fund DBA students, especially when they use data from their employers and when their research is relevant for their companies.

### **Recognition: Established Degree vs. Gaining Recognition**

Clearly, the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is a worldwide recognized academic degree. In contrast, the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) is a relatively young degree and may not be, yet, as much known and recognized as the Ph.D. But if the DBA comes from an established and renowned institution, also the DBA degree itself may gain acceptance and the respective person may profit from a higher recognition than if the degree was obtained from a no-name school. In general, the DBA seems to gain recognition and DBA programs can be considered as an emerging market for business schools.

### **Career Paths in Business Administration**

With a bachelor's degree in business administration, you'll qualify for an array of leadership positions and other advanced roles in private, public and non-profit organizations. You'll have the option to work across industries as a business analyst, human resources generalist, operations manager or marketing specialist.

DBA equips professionals with expertise in leadership and management principles and a higher level of competence in conducting research. This advanced degree primes students for working in management at the senior-executive level, as well as in teaching and research at universities.

### **Doctorate of Business Administration in the Region**

By taking an example of DBA at Leadership & Management Development Center at Egypt, the DBA program has the objective of qualifying managers in local and global organizations to acquire the knowledge and skills in modern scientific management which would allow them to fill in various roles in those organizations, while ensuring excellence in practical sides of the business.

### **Areas of Study in DB**

The course is combined of fourteen subjects, with six elective courses. The student chooses his/her preferred area from the following subjects:

- Marketing Management
- Business Administration
- Logistics Management
- Finance and Accounting
- Human Resource Management

- Hospital Management

### **Period of Study**

The study period is between three years (as a minimum) and five years (maximum). Credit hours are sixty-six credit hours, forty-four credit hours being for subjects and twenty-two credit hours for the thesis.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Problem Statement and Motivation of Research**

While undergraduate studies are considered to be a path rather than a matter of choice, postgraduate studies and mainly Doctorate remains under question mark among many of the scholars, universities, organizations and professionals. In the business field, the question is raised regarding practice versus academic knowledge. Some professionals may argue that pursuing a doctorate of business administration may not result in major positive outcomes in the business field. On the other hand, many of professionals in companies are either pursuing or considering pursuing DBA studies. However, the drivers behind their intention to pursue DBA remain unclear. Hence, this study aims to study the perception of DBA among Saudi professionals and factors that would drive Saudi professionals' decision to undertake a DBA program.

### **Research Questions**

- What would drive a professional in Saudi Arabia to pursue a DBA program?
- What is the perception of the importance of DBA among Saudi professionals in today's market place?
- What value do DBA degrees contribute to organizations in Saudi Arabia?
- What is the perceived influence of DBA degree on career development among Saudi professionals?
- To what extent does a passion for knowledge contribute to the decision of pursuing DBA degree among Saudi professionals?
- To what extent does the level of financial investment play a role in the decision to undertake a DBA degree among professionals in Saudi Arabia?

### **Research Objectives**

- To examine factors influencing Saudi professional's decision to undertake a DBA program.
- To examine Saudi's perception of importance and value of undertaking a DBA program.
- To find out the value and contribution that DBA would add to organizations in Saudi Arabia.
- To provide recommendations for Saudi organizations, universities and government about utilizing DBA programs and better understanding their value.

### **Research Methods**

#### **Research Design**

The research examines the area of customer behavior towards undertaking a DBA program. The type of research design to be used is descriptive research. According to Mark Leary, Descriptive research is designed to describe the

characteristics or behaviors of a particular population in a systematic and accurate fashion. (Leary, 2004). Also, the research method will be qualitative research.

### Assumptions

The research assumes that the participants of the questionnaire have an understanding of the terms mentioned in it. It's also assumed that the information that was given in the questionnaire by participants is true.

### Study Population

The paper will study the answers of 125 respondents. These respondents are limited to Saudi professionals.

### Data Collection & Analysis

Data was collected through questionnaire aiming to examine the relevance of four main factors towards the dependent variables. Also, a focus group was conducted whereby respondents were able to express their thoughts freely. We have used the most modern and fastest way to communicate with all possible respondents with the use of the internet. Responding to such survey was made convenient so that it will not take too much time to accomplish by the target professionals.

Primarily, a survey was launch to support this study. It was distributed to major companies within the kingdom such as Aramco and Sabic. It was also cascaded to other sectors such as schools and universities to be answered by different professional. We exerted extra effort for this questionnaire to reach top and executive positions to balance all views and insights. Along with the survey, frequent discussions were also being conducted.

### Data Analysis: Survey and Anova (Analysis of Variance)

#### Importance of DBA in Saudi Companies

Since the study is about the importance of DBA in Saudi companies, the analysis will require affirming whether DBA has a significant importance in the Saudi companies by comparing the percentages of those who are in support of DBA and those against, as per the survey questions, which are relevant.

The proportion of those who prefer DBA and those who do not, are shown in the specific questions below along with the respective corresponding answers:

**Table 2**

Questions	Prefer DBA - Count	Do Not Prefer DBA-Count
11. Do DBA qualified employees have a higher added-value for the company?	97(Yes)	7(no)
12. Will employees with a DBA qualification serve the company better on a strategic level?	58(Almost)	0(Never)
14. Do you think Saudi companies prefer DBA holders for higher posts?	35(Almost)	14(Never)
15. Do you think that DBA holders are more innovative and creative?	58(Yes)	33(No)
20. Would DBA holders receive higher salaries?	83(Yes)	8(no)
30. Would you pursue a DBA for acquiring new knowledge to back-up your decision-making process?	114(Yes)	14(no)



On analyzing the data using ANOVA to compare the means of the two groups, the results generated below:

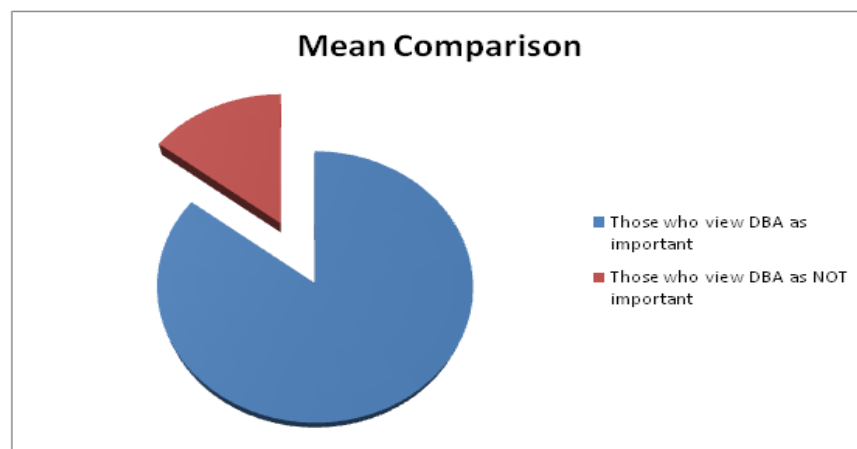
**Table 3**

ANOVA TABLE					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	22620.083	1	22620.083	52.766	.001
Error	2143.417	5	428.683		

Since the significance is 0.001, which is less than 0.05 (alpha significance level), we reject the null hypothesis of equal means and conclude that there is a difference between those who view DBA as important and those who say otherwise (not important).

**Table 3**

MEAN COMPARISON				
F1	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Those who view DBA as important	74.167	11.892	48.596	104.737
Those who view DBA as NOT important	12.667	4.587	.874	24.459



**Figure 1**

In general, those who view DBA as important are many in number compared to those who view DBA as NOT important, which affirms that DBA is very important in Saudi companies.

## **FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS**

### **Factors Influencing Saudi Professionals to Undertake Doctorate of Business Administration**

#### **Career Development**

One of the areas the research examined is the extent to which possessing a DBA would achieve substantial results in the career development of its candidates.

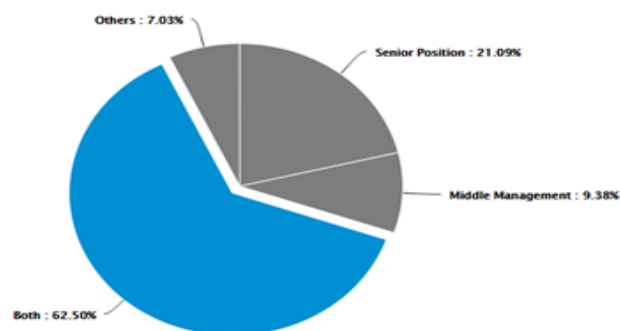
Among the research population, around 75% thought DBA-qualified employees have a higher added-value for the companies in which they are working in. This shows a strong belief among the majority of respondents that DBA knowledge would positively contribute to organizations and individuals possessing a DBA degree.

However, when compared with experience, the importance of having DBA seems to diminish. Only 5% believed possessing a high qualification such as DBA is more important for career development than experience, 23% believed experience is more important while a majority of 71% believed both are equally important to fuel career development.

In terms of favoring DBA holders for higher positions in companies, around 64% of the respondents believed Saudi companies prefer employees possessing DBA either most of the times or sometimes. Around 11% believed Saudi companies had no preference towards DBA holders for higher positions.

The research also aimed to test the level of perceived creativity and innovativeness among DBA-qualified employees. 45% believed DBA holders are more innovative and creative, 25.7% thought there is no link between creativity and innovativeness and DBA.

Respondents were asked on the level of management in which they believe DBA holders would work effectively in. The results came as below:



**Figure 2**

Also the research aimed to find out perception about factors that will influence career development in general. Only 10% believed DBA is the main factor while a majority of 38% thought knowledge and skills to be the main factor. The second top factor was experience as around 19% believed it to be the main factor.

When it comes to paychecks, a majority of 65% thought that DBA holders would receive higher salaries while only 6% believed DBA wouldn't affect salary level, and the rest were undecided. This solidifies the suggestion that DBA would add notable value to individuals in terms their working career.

Also, respondents were asked the following; "all other factors being equal, would a DBA degree provide an advantage over a Master's degree for promotion?" A slight majority of 54% answered with yes while 27% were negative on this. Around 19% replied "I don't know".

### **Passion for Knowledge**

As discussed before, knowledge could be one of the drivers behind a person's interest in pursuing DBA. Mostly, those who seek to develop their knowledge would use that knowledge to support their decision making. The research aimed to examine this area by asking respondents whether they would pursue a DBA to acquiring new knowledge to back-

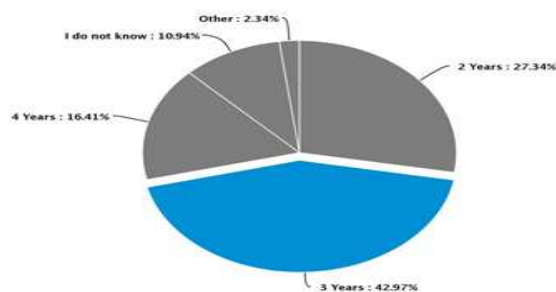
up decision-making process. A majority of 89% replied with a yes. This showcases the need among Saudi professionals for knowledge that will help them make better decisions and enrich the decision-making process in their organizations.

### Willingness to Invest

It was important to measure the extent to which respondents were willing to invest in a DBA program as it is an important consideration to find out how serious respondents were about taking a DBA program. Employees were asked if they would invest in DBA without a scholarship, and the results were; 38% said yes, 39% replied with probably, and only 12.5% said no. The results suggest moderate reliance towards taking a DBA program.

The research also aimed to measure willingness to invest in as they were asked about a number of years that seem reasonable for a DBA program. A majority of 43% believed three years is the most reasonable time.

Also, the research looked into the preferred timings and method of taking the DBA.



**Figure 3**

The majority were mostly split between doing classes at regular times with employees leaving for study (38%) and having classes at the weekend (37%) while 25% preferred weekdays at evening.

### Other Factors and Considerations

Respondents were given the chance to express freely factors and considerations that would motivate them to pursue DBA. One of the most notable factors was self-esteem. For some of the respondents; the motivation for possessing a DBA degree is highly linked to self-image. They believed having DBA would inspire personnel around them and would gain them higher respect among their employees and colleagues.

Another factor is the belief among some respondents that DBA would guide them strategically in business and would enhance their understanding of “the rules of the game” as one respondent described it. They believe DBA would allow employees work more efficiently and over think competitors in the market by making the right moves.

Moreover, interest in learning new things in life which would make a person live more fulfilled was another important consideration. They also linked this factor to growing in personality and becoming more confident thinkers. DBA is believed to challenge the thinking of its candidates and encourage critical thinking, and some respondents believed such learning would allow them to elevate their thinking inside and outside the business world.

Lastly, some respondents believed upgrading educational level is important, especially considering that an increasing number of Master holders are in the market which made it less distinguishable.

### **Perception of Doctorate of Business Administration among Saudi Professionals**

Saudi Professionals perceive DBA as one of the best sources of gaining knowledge and skills that will enable them to demand for higher salary, to get promoted, to target Managerial positions and even achieve higher social standing and prestige. The majority of the respondents, around 54% believe that all of the mentioned are viable reasons to invest time and financial resources to pursue DBA. 14.84% of Respondents believe that the main reason for pursuing DBA is to get more knowledge. 10.16% will pursue DBA to enable them to target managerial position, 9.38% believes it will enhance social standing and prestige, 5.47% believes that with DBA, you can get higher Salary, 2.34% thinks DBA can get you promoted. Others have expressed their opinion that there isn't enough reason to pursue DBA.

The presence of employees with Doctorate Degrees can enhance a company's reputation, credibility, visibility, and reliability. This is again based on the perception of Saudi Professional to DBA. However, majority of respondents are not sure about this, around 28% of respondents thinks that this is the case.

As to the method of studying DBA, majority of respondents, 53.91%, prefer to study DBA in normal classroom setting where students attend lectures and interact with professors and mentors as theories and practical cases are discussed, analyzed and learned from. Around 24% of respondents prefer hybrid teaching where classes are not limited to the confinement of classrooms and lecture halls but with the inclusion of technology and online practices. Classes can be attended in remote; lectures can be online as well along with taking exams during the course. 15.62% of respondents think DBA should and can be taken through online teaching, and 7% do not know.

43.65% of respondents prefer Ph.D. and 26.98% prefer DBA. This shows that majority of respondents prefer Research focused doctoral program that aims to enhance the study and its teachings over Doctorate in business meant for transforming and developing businesses. Around 29% of respondents do not know or huge probability that they are not aware of the difference between the two programs.

The perception of a majority of the respondents is to link DBA to the strategic level of management rather than the functional level, and they perceive DBA holders to be more competent for positions that require strategic thinking.

DBA, according to 50.68% of respondents, is an internationally 46.09% of the respondents do not know whether it may or may not be recognized internationally.

### **Importance of Doctorate of Business Administration for Organizations in Saudi Arabia**

DBA aims to enhance and develop business practice through qualitative and quantitative research. Its importance in business advancement cannot be emphasized enough. However, DBA does not carry much weight in hiring important positions in Saudi Arabia at this time. 34.62% of respondents think that MBA is much preferred to DBA holders, where DBA preference only represents 19.23%. Same as MBA, companies prefer to hire Bachelor Degree holders as long as they have enough experience in the field, 34.62% of respondents' looks at experienced candidates with Bachelor's Degree. 11.54% does not know and are un-assured.

Most Organizations prefer to promote an employee who is a DBA holder for higher positions rather than recruiting externally for the same positions. 65.38% has preference over 7.69% of respondents. However, 26.92% are unaware. It is assumed that pursuance of DBA can prove beneficial to an employee in terms of Career development since Organizations prefer to promote those with such qualifications.

The majority of respondents are in the Executive Management level, about 55.47%. The other 44.53% are Employers or business owners. At this time, we can assume that respondents are decision makers that issue decisive strategic plans and organizational investments. 78.85% will consider giving scholarship programs to some employees with high potential to pursue DBA in the Kingdom, only 21.15% would not. This information will verify that DBA Practitioners are found to be important for Organizations.

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

This study sheds light on the perceived value of DBA in Saudi Arabia and factors that influence Saudi professionals to undertake the program. The research was focused on Saudi professional to ensure higher validity and relatedness of results to ensure that results will provide valid insights for organizations, government, and universities.

It appears that there is strong belief among respondents that possessing a DBA program would nurture their careers and would result in a higher paycheck. They also believed that DBA is relevant to most levels of management but especially middle and senior management. This could be linked to the understanding that DBA would include rich knowledge in the strategic management field. Some respondents believed such knowledge would provide an edge to managers holding the degree to understand better business and how to have the upper hand over competitors.

Also, DBA knowledge was perceived to be highly beneficial to an organization. Improving knowledge to enhance decision making was one of the most significant factors in the decision to pursue a DBA among Saudi professionals.

While the research results were positive on the outcomes of DBA in organizations and for individuals; they, however, emphasize that DBA is just one element in the success formula, and other elements such as skills & knowledge and experience were believed to be still more important than DBA. Nonetheless, DBA didn't seem to carry high weight in terms of chances of getting its holders hired and possessing a Master degree seemed to provide higher possibilities of getting employed rather than a DBA. One reason for that could be the fact that some believe DBA to be a highly academic and a Masters degree would be more practical. However, it was notable that DBA holders would have higher chances of being promoted than non-DBA holders.

Moreover, being a DBA holder was highly related to self-esteem among some respondents. Being addressed as "Doctor" elevates one's social standing in Saudi Arabia and would inspire people around the DBA holder especially in the workplace. Therefore, it was expressed that having such high level of education is about self-image and the satisfaction of having the high respect from people.

Lastly, while the study outlined some of the most significant factors for pursuing DBA in Saudi Arabia, it has also shown strong interest among respondents in the subject of pursuing DBA which calls for further research in the area.

### Recommendations

The nature of results of the study will be relevant to different stakeholders, namely universities, business organizations and government in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, recommendations will be segmented on that basis.

#### For Universities

- Since there is a strong belief that DBA would help in improving careers of its holders, universities are

advised to ensure DBA programs provide advanced business knowledge that would provide with its holders with an edge in work place and decision-making.

- The majority of those who are interested in DBA program are working professionals, and therefore universities should ensure convenient options for studying available for candidates such as weekend classes and remote lectures. Flexibility should be a core component of DBA programs while maintaining value.
- Technological advancements and internet have provided rich solutions for teaching, and universities are advised to take advantage of those in DBA programs by allowing for online discussions, e.g. through Skype.

### **For Business Organizations**

- Organizations in Saudi Arabia are advised to encourage its employees to pursue higher learning such as DBA to ensure up-to-date business knowledge. This could be done by allowing reputable universities to market DBA programs to company employees.
- Invest in developing employees by offering DBA tuition loans, scholarships and provide support for employees taking the programs. Such support could be through allowing for flexible working hours for DBA candidates.

### **For Government**

- Incentive programs to Saudi professionals would be beneficial as it would encourage working professionals to pursue higher education and would improve performance of organizations in the Kingdom which would have a positive impact on the economy.
- While DBA is not an easy program for most professionals to undertake, the government is advised to provide more DBA scholarships for promising candidates as it will encourage more people to pursue such high level of learning.

## **LIMITATIONS**

The period of which the study was conducted was very less. The data from samples are not all accurate as considered due to the busy work schedules of respondents who participated in the survey

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## APPENDICES

### Questionnaire

I hereby declare that the below mentioned questions as part of my project “The Importance of Doctorate of Business Administration for a higher competitiveness of the Saudi Economy,” for the completion of my EMBA thesis. Please cooperate with me by filling the questionnaire. I assure you that the information will remain confidential. Your name will not be disclosed. You are free not to write your name.

The DBA is a doctorate program in business administration targeting to equip the candidate with high level knowledge, skills, and expertise to be among the top citizens who will lead the Kingdom in the new era of digital and knowledge based economy. The DBA is the highest degree that could be offered by higher education institutions. The difference between DBA and Ph. D is the research component in which theory is less emphasized in the DBA versus the Ph. D. The Doctors from the DBA will be solution oriented to the contemporary industrial problems with high societal impact. Please tick the correct options wherever required and answer it as per your perception.

#### C. Personal details

NAME\* :

AGE :

AFFILIATION OR SECTOR :

GENDER :

POSITION :

DEPARTMENT :

EXPERIENCE :

MARRIED OR SINGLE :

\*Optional

### General Details

1. If you were offered a DBA, what would be the main reason for taking this program? Select all that applies.

- a. Getting more knowledge ☐
- b. Getting higher salary ☐
- c. Getting promotion ☐
- d. Targeting Management position ☐
- e. Targeting higher social standing and prestige ☐
- f. All of the above ☐

2. DBA qualified employees have a higher added-value to the company

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Employees with DBA qualification will serve the company better on a strategic level

Almost ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never ☐

4. What do you think is more important for the career advancement: qualification and mainly DBA or experience?

Qualification ☐ Experience ☐ Both ☐

5. Do you think that Saudi companies prefer DBA holders for higher posts?

Almost ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never ☐

6. Do you think that DBA holders are more innovators and creative?

Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Is DBA an internationally recognized degree?

Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know ☐

8. DBA holders can work effectively in

Senior Positions ☐ Middle Management ☐ Both ☐

9. According to you which one of the following will help you better in your future career trajectory?

Experience ☐ Personality ☐ Knowledge and Skills ☐ Age ☐

Bachelor Degree ☐ Master Degree ☐ DBA ☐

10. Do you think DBA from international universities outside the Kingdom would welfare you better than a local DBA with international partnership?

Yes ☐ No ☐

11. DBA holders would receive higher salaries.

Yes ☐ No ☐

12. DBA holders would improve the reputation, credibility, visibility and reliability of the company

Always ☐ Probably ☐ Never ☐

13. Do you think that the DBA will help you to access higher positions compared to roster program?

Yes ☐ No ☐

14. What bracket of tuition fees for the DBA seems reasonable to you (in thousands SAR)?

80K-90K ☐ 91K-100K ☐ 101K-110K ☐

15. (a) If you receive a scholarship for the DBA, would you:

Automatically accept it ☐ think about it ☐ postpone it ☐

15. (b) If you don't receive a scholarship for the DBA, would you still consider it for your future, personal and professional growth

Yes ☐ No ☐ Probably ☐

16. What is the number of years that seem reasonable to you for taking the DBA?

2 years ☐ 3 years ☐ 4 years ☐

17. Do you prefer a DBA to be :

Regular teaching ☐ online teaching ☐ hybrid teaching ☐

18. If you have the opportunity to do a DBA in KSA or outside the Kingdom but online DBA, what would be your preference?:

KSA ☐ International Online DBA ☐

19. Do you prefer the DBA to be taught in:

Weekdays evening ☐ Week-ends ☐

Regular hours with employee's leave for study ☐

20. Would you pursue a DBA for acquiring new knowledge to back-up your decision making process?

Yes ☐ No ☐

21. Other important considerations/suggestions that motivate you for doing DBA:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

22. Would you prefer Ph. D over the DBA and why? Yes ☐ No ☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### FOR EMPLOYERS (OR EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT) ONLY

1. What is your hiring preference for important position?

Master degree ☐ DBA degree ☐ Bachelor degree with experience ☐

2. Do you perceive the DBA holder as a more strategic thinker and visionary than a Masters holder?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Would you prefer to promote an employee who is a DBA holder for higher positions or recruit externally for those positions?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. All other factors being equal, would a DBA degree provide an advantage over a Master's Degree for promotion?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Would you consider giving scholarship to some of your employees with high potential to pursue a DBA in the Kingdom?

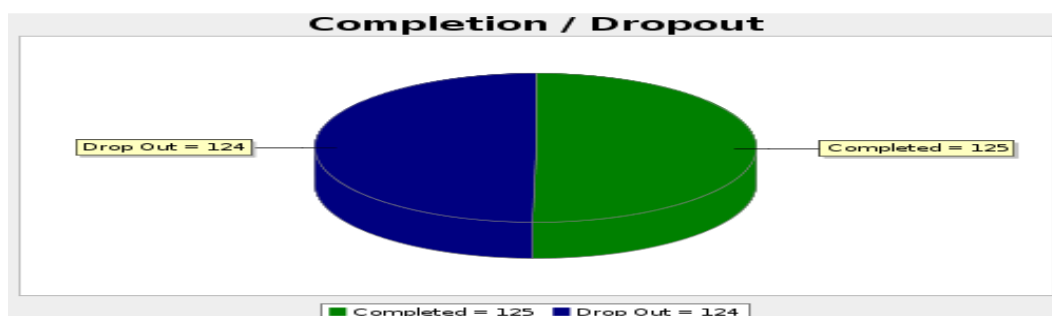
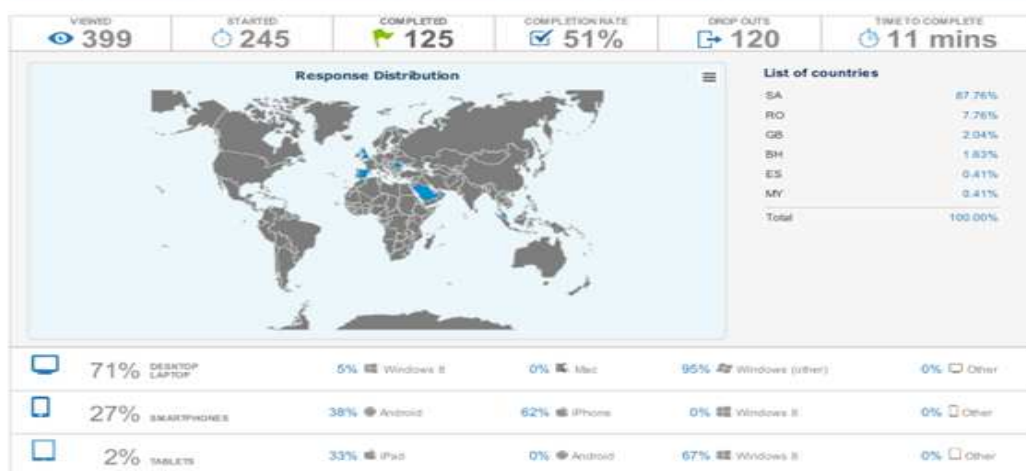
Yes ☐ No ☐

Thank you for your time in accomplishing this survey.

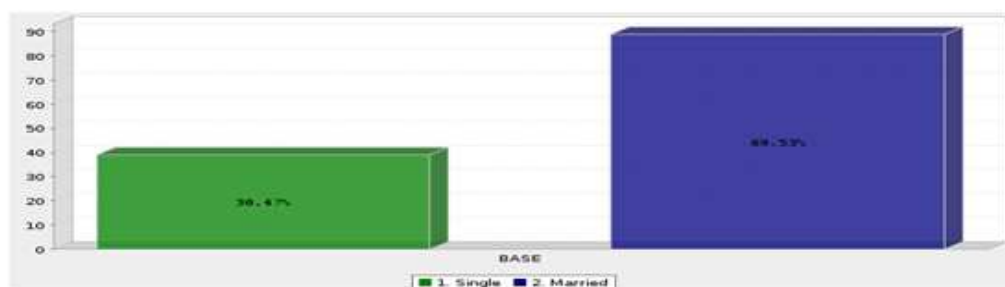
This will be beneficial to the country by leveraging our citizens to be equipped with a high level of knowledge, skills and expertise. This will lead the kingdom towards achieving a new era of a more successful economy.

## Survey Overview

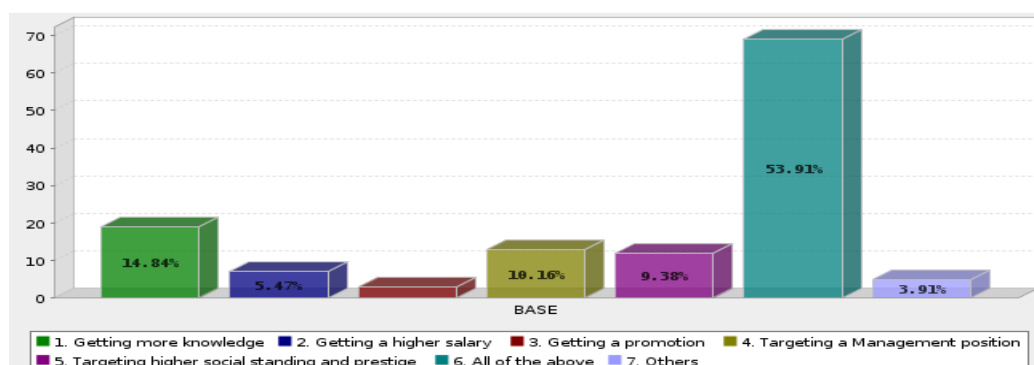
### Survey Report: The Importance of DBA in Saudi Companies



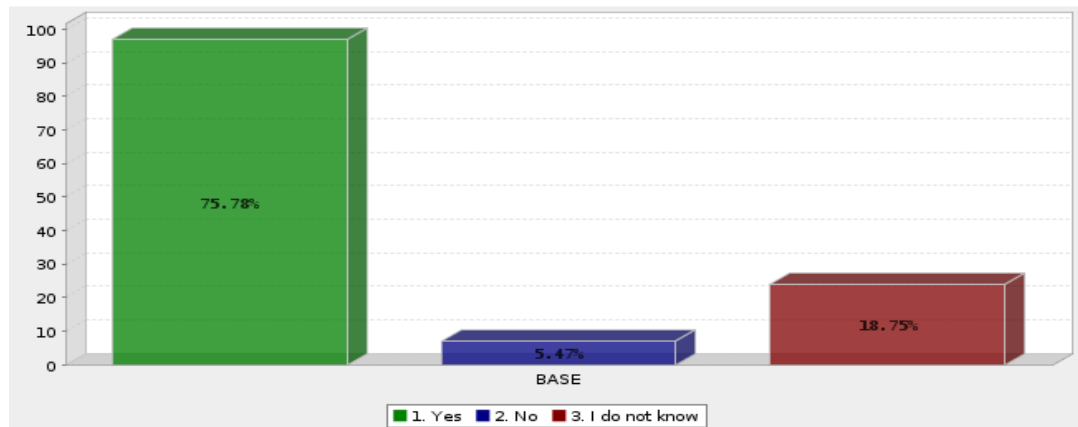
## Marital Status



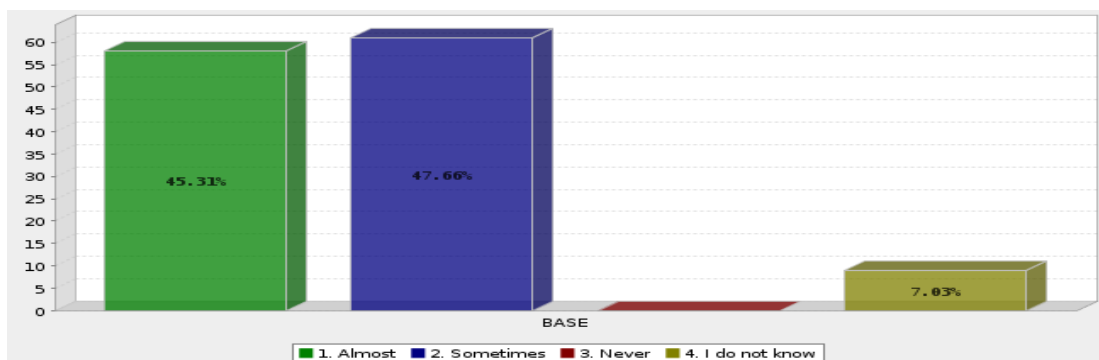
If you were offered a DBA, what would be the main Reason for taking this Program? Select all that Applies



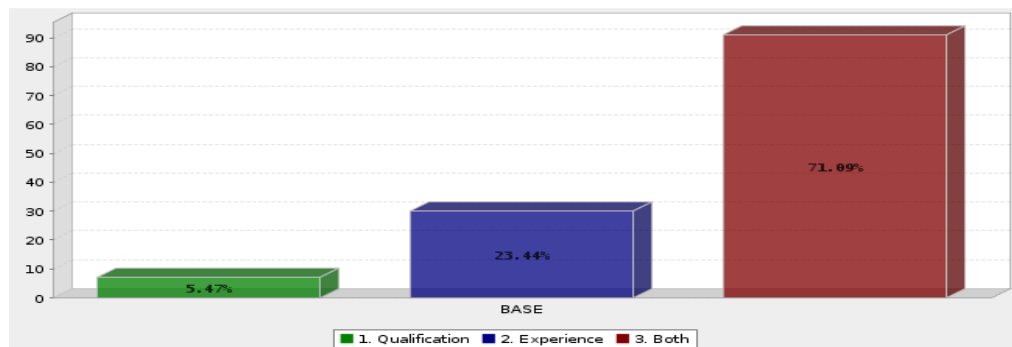
**DBA Qualified Employees have a Higher Added-Value for the Company**



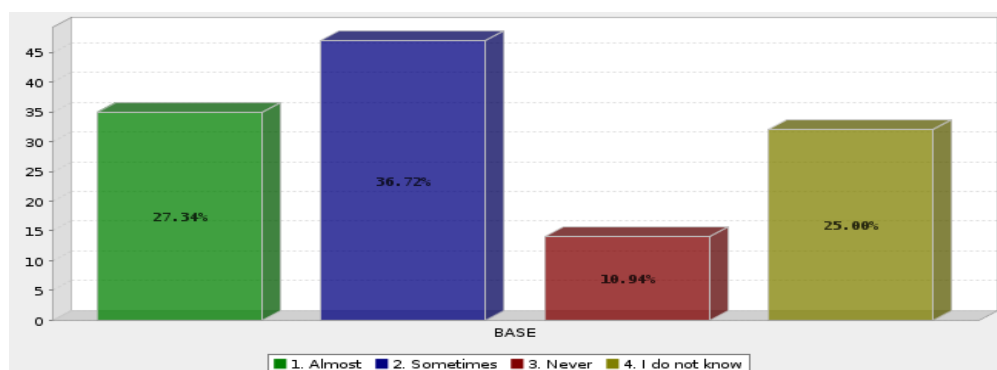
### Employees with a DBA Qualification will Serve the Company Better on a Strategic Level



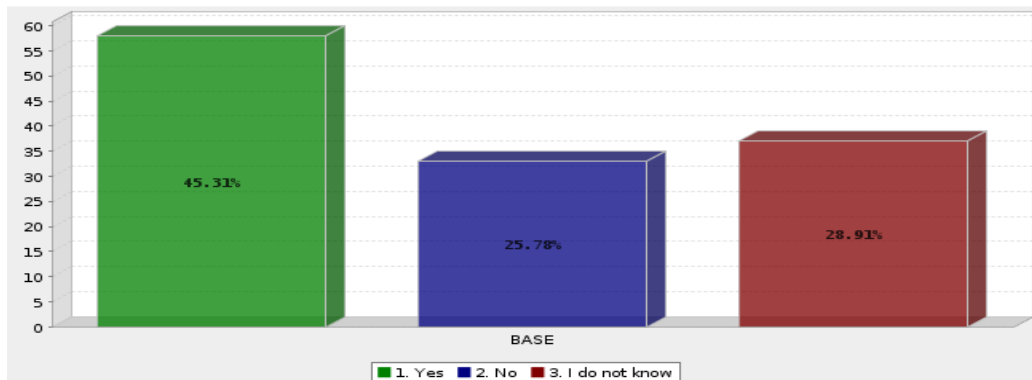
### What do you think is more important for Career Advancement: Qualification and Mainly DBA or Experience?



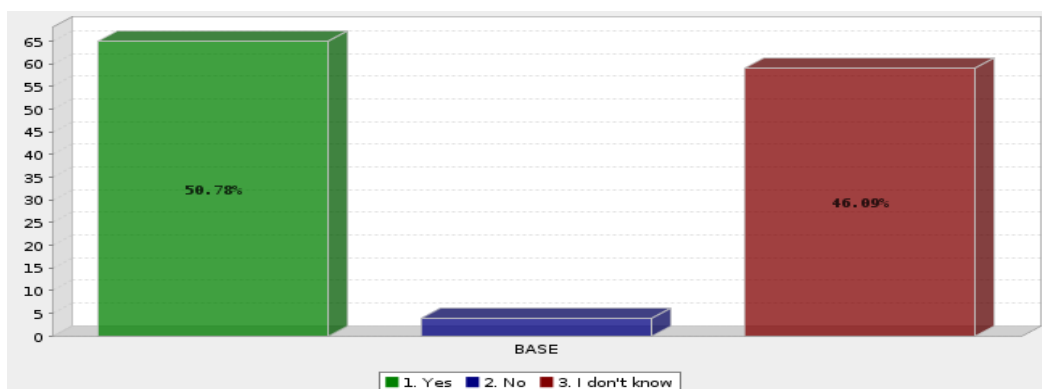
### Do you Think that Saudi Companies prefer DBA Holders for Higher Posts?



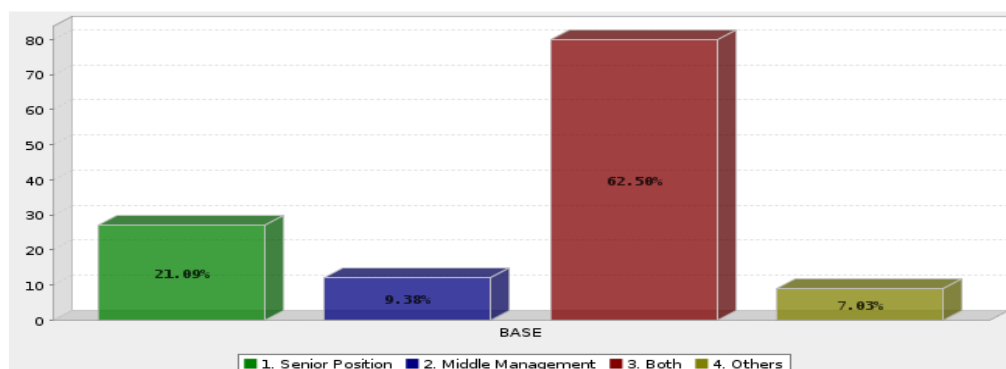
### Do you think that DBA Holders are more Innovative and Creative?



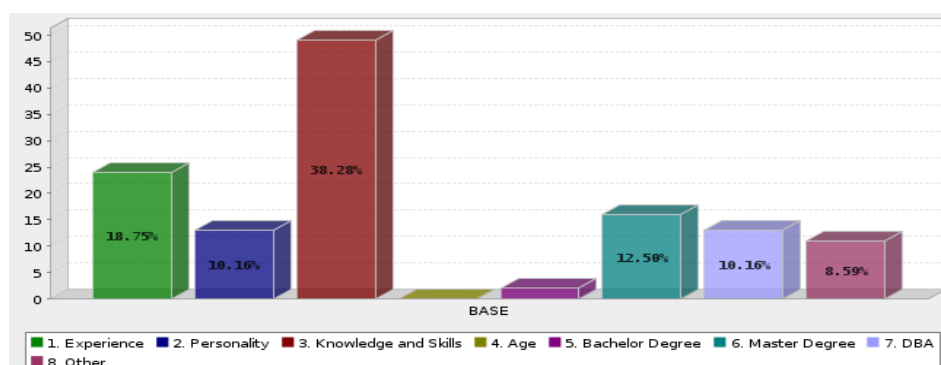
**Is DBA an Internationally Recognized Degree?**



**DBA Holders can work effectively in:**

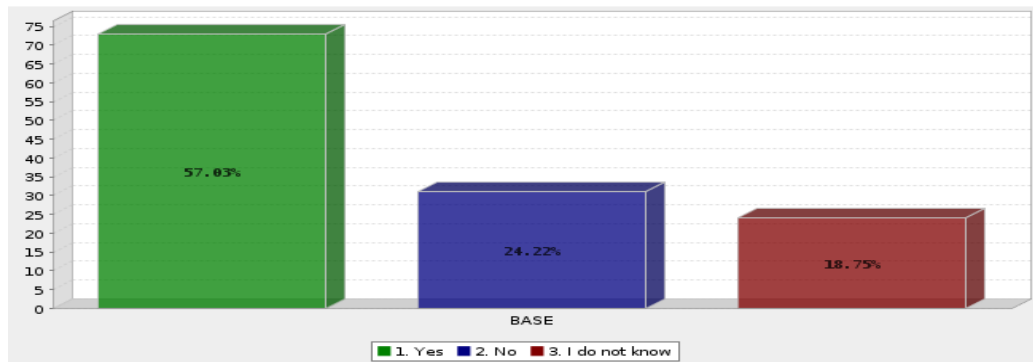


**According to you which one of the following will help you Better in your Future Career Trajectory?**

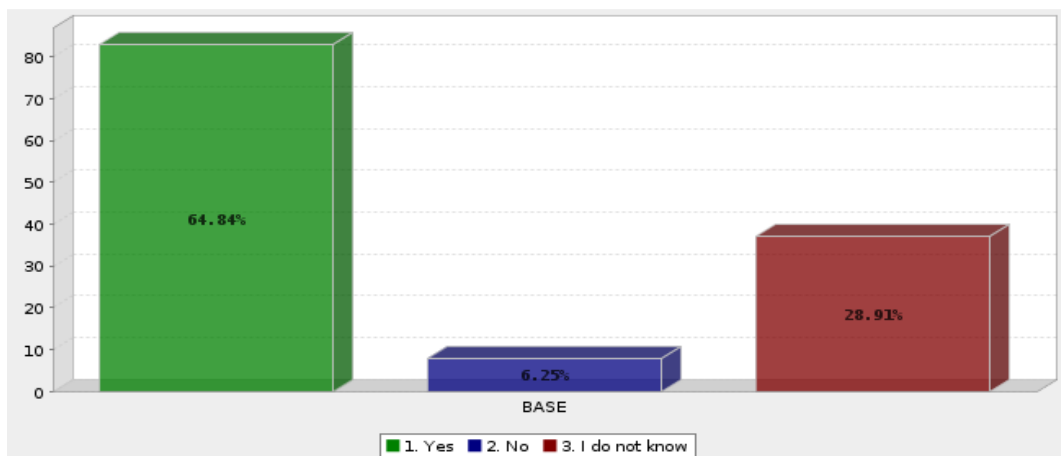


**Do you think a DBA from an International University Outside of the Kingdom would be Better for you than a Local DBA with International Partnership?**

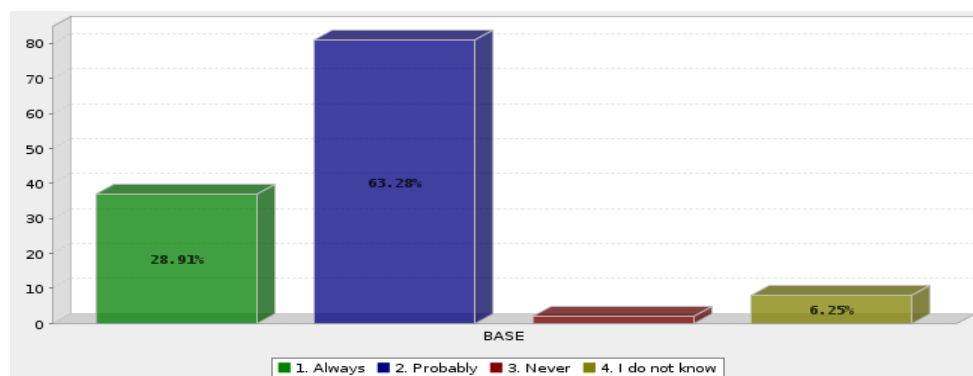




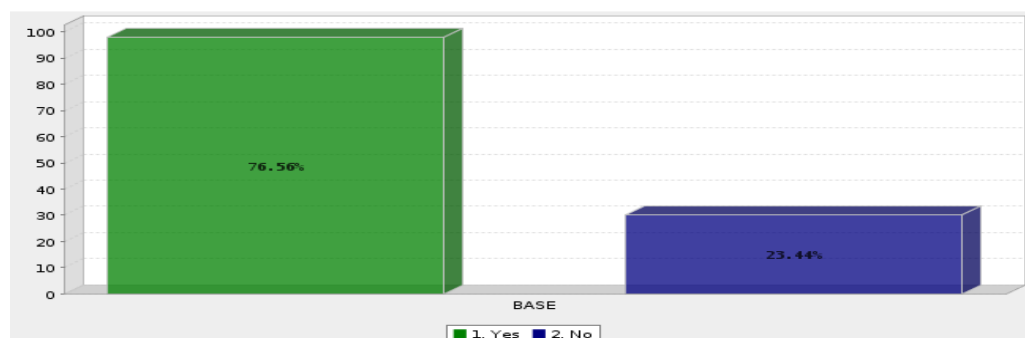
**DBA Holders would Receive Higher Salaries.**



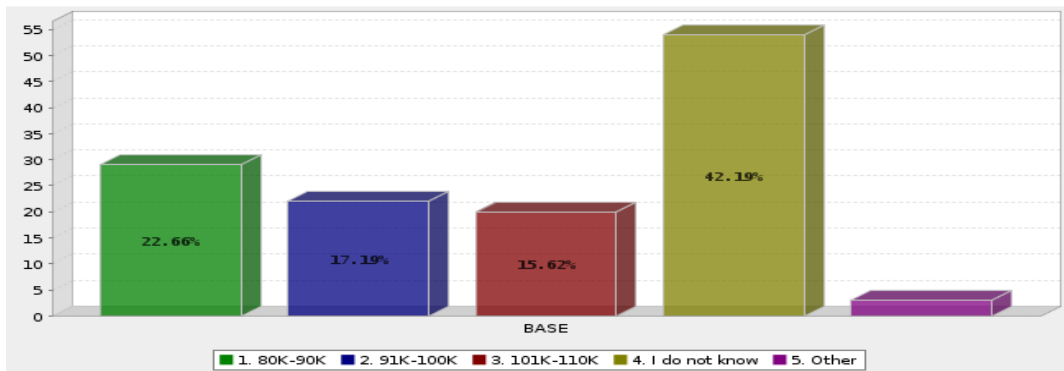
**DBA Holders would Improve the Reputation, Credibility, Visibility and Reliability of the Company**



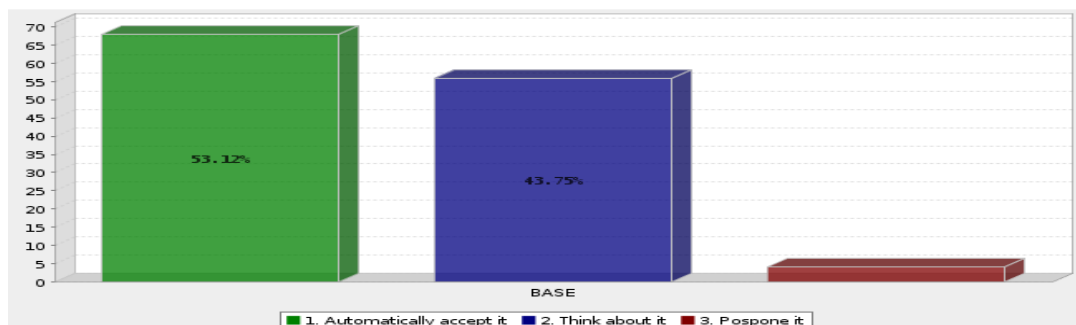
**Do you think that the DBA will help you to Access Higher Positions Compared to the Roster Program?**



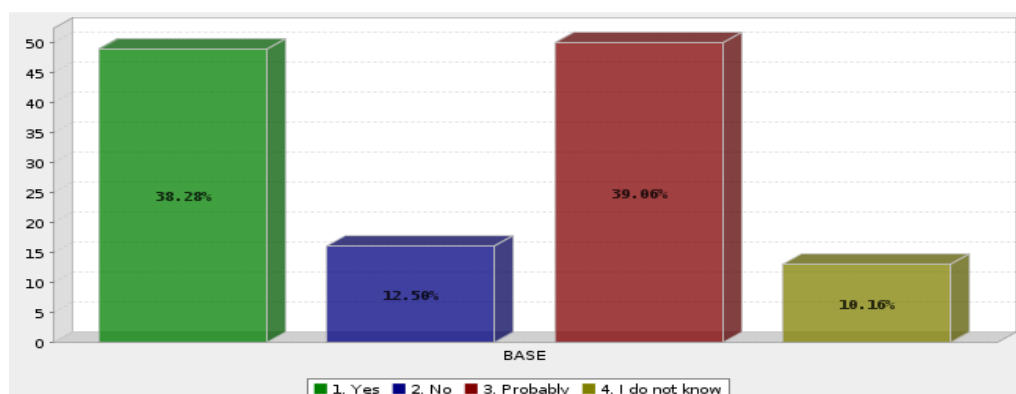
**What bracket of Tuition Fees for the DBA Seems Reasonable to you (Figures in Thousands SAR)?**



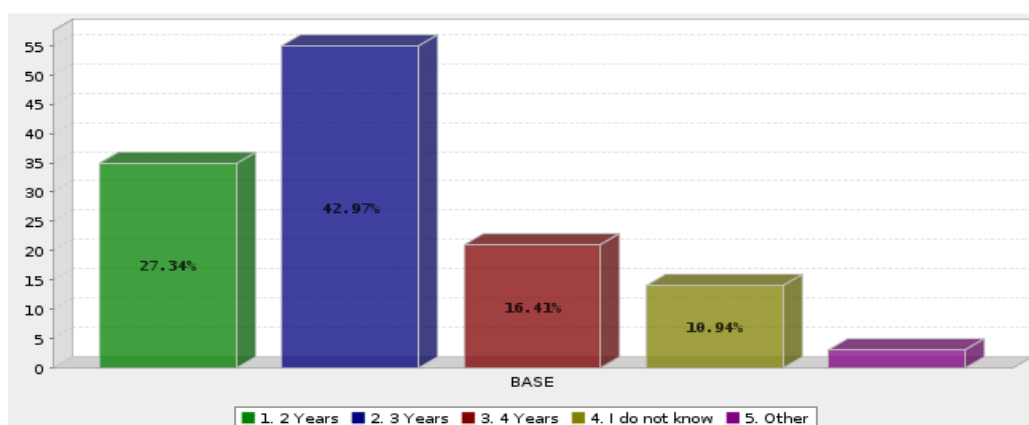
If you receive a Scholarship for the DBA, would you:



If you don't Receive a Scholarship for the DBA, would you still Consider it for your Future, Personal and Professional Growth



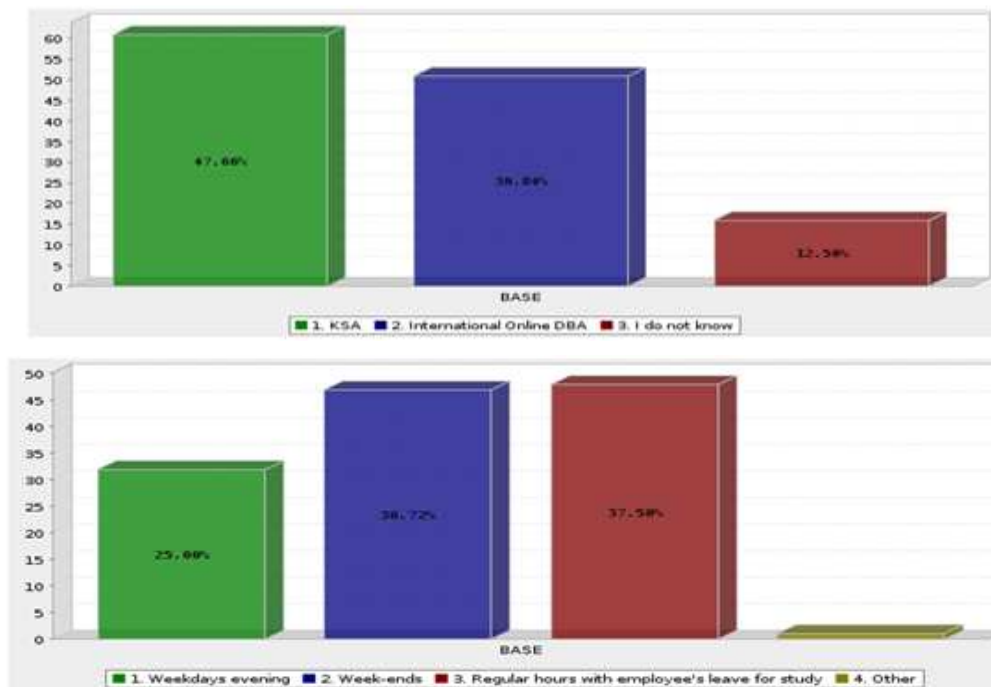
What is the Number of Years that Seem Reasonable to you for taking the DBA?



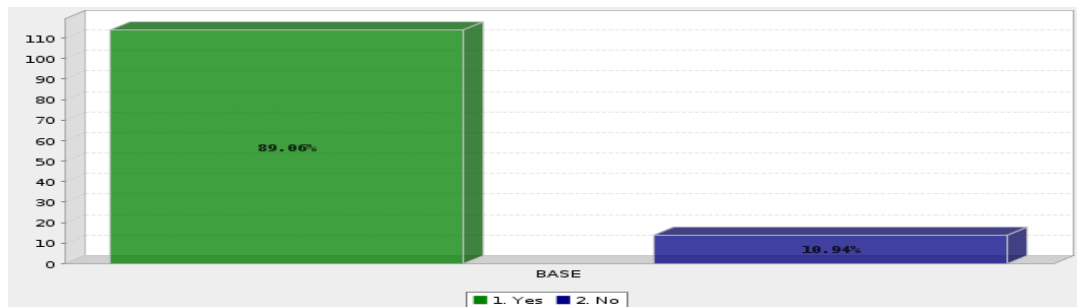
**Do you prefer a DBA to be?**

**If you have the Opportunity to do a DBA in KSA or Outside the KINGDOM but Online, what would be your Preference?**

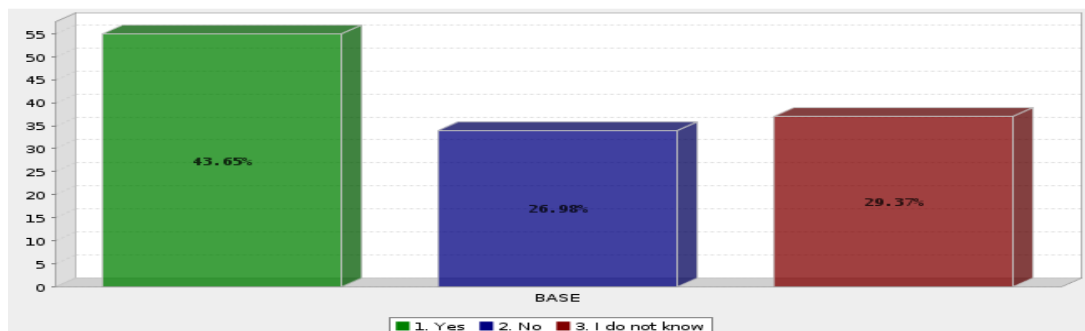
**Do you prefer the DBA to be taught in?**



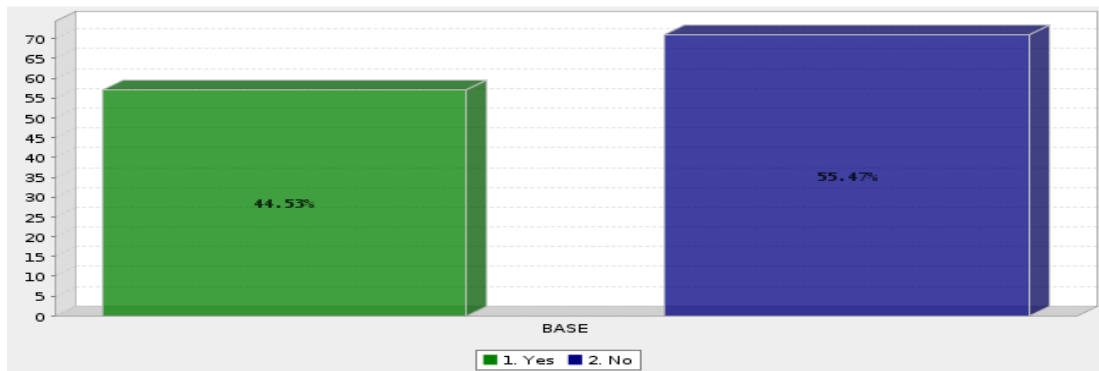
**Would you pursue a DBA for Acquiring new Knowledge to back-up Your Decision Making Process?**



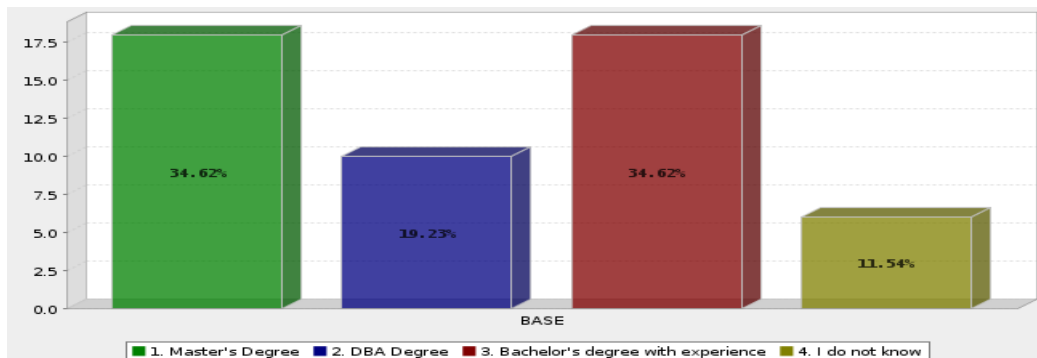
**Would you prefer a Ph.D. over the DBA?**



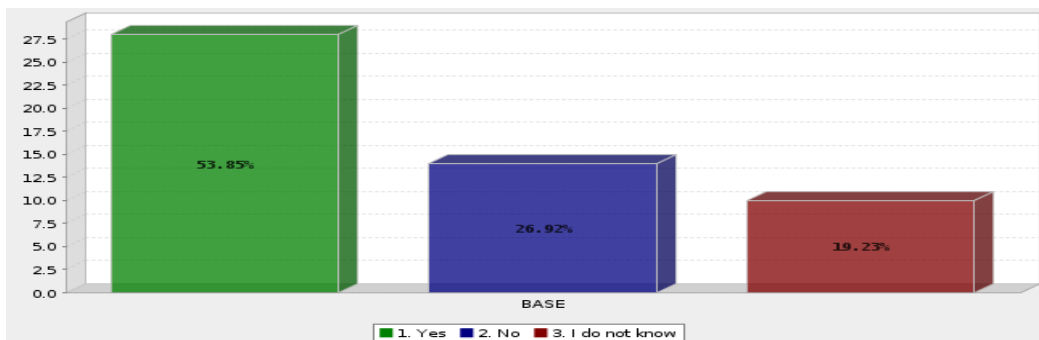
**Are you an Employer or under Executive Management?**



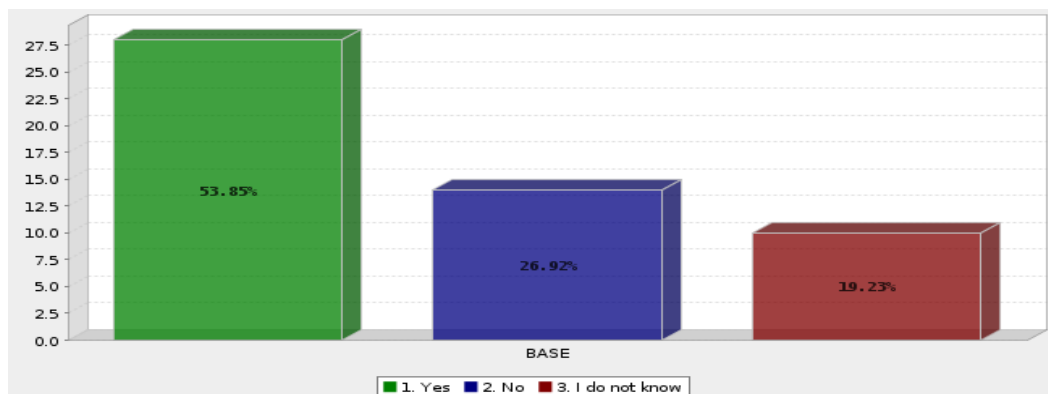
What is your hiring preference for important positions?



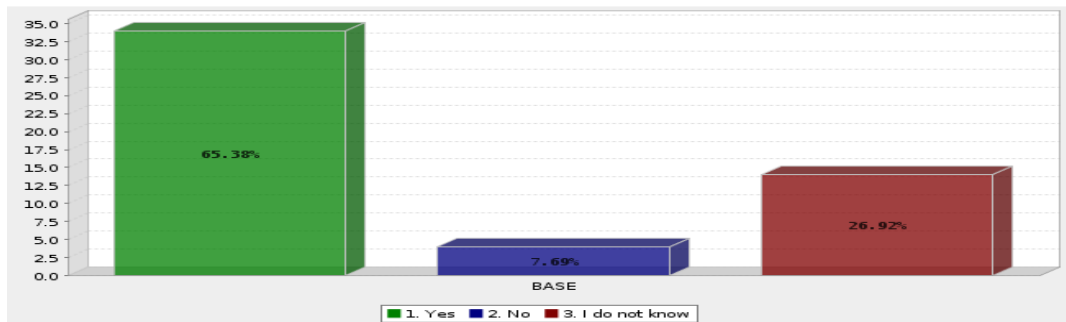
Do you perceive the DBA Holder as a more Strategic Thinker and Visionary than a Masters Holder?



All other Factors Being Equal, would a DBA Degree Provide an Advantage over a Master's Degree for Promotion?



Would you prefer to promote an Employee who is a DBA Holder for a Higher Positions or Recruit Externally for Those Positions?



**Would you Consider Giving Scholarship to some of your Employees with High Potential to Pursue a DBA in the Kingdom?**

